

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

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OF ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS

(Section of the Library
Association)

Hon. Editor: Frank M. Gardner

Willesden Public Libraries



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EDITORIAL

A LARGE number of assistants heard Mr. Stanley Unwin reveal a few new truths about publishing at the Inaugural Meeting. He also made some very pertinent remarks on the growing illiteracy of the reading public, which made pleasant hearing to those of us who think that we alone have any concern for the public taste. A few thrusts at the habits of librarians (especially on the matter of the purchase of *new* books) were delivered with the delicacy of a kindred soul. Sir Henry Miers handled the meeting with his usual urbanity. We hope to publish Mr. Unwin's address in the next issue of *The Library Assistant*.

The next meeting of the Association will not be at the Royal Academy as announced. It will be a joint meeting with the London and Home Counties Branch of the Library Association, and will take place on 8th November at the L.C.C. Education Library, County Hall, S.E.1, at 6.30 p.m. Members will assemble in the large entrance hall, Belvedere Road. Miss R. P. L. Fraser, M.A., Librarian, will describe the Library, and Mr. Duncan Gray, of St. Marylebone, will speak on "Library co-operation in London." Before the papers an inspection will be made of the Education Library. Miss Fraser is carrying on an important work which should appeal to library staffs working in the L.C.C. area, and since this is the first occasion on which the A.A.L. has met at the County Hall, it is hoped there will be a good attendance.

Also in November members will have an opportunity fully to test the amenities of Chaucer House (always bearing in mind the legitimate purposes mentioned by the Hon. Secretary at the Inaugural Meeting). A dance will be held there on Wednesday, 22nd November, from 7.45 p.m. to 11.30 p.m. Tickets will cost 2s.6d. each, including refreshments, and may be obtained from Mr. W. C. Pugsley, Public Library, 257 High Road, Chadwell Heath, Wandsworth, or any member of the Council of the A.A.L.

We have received information from the National Central Library that His Majesty the King, who will be accompanied by Her Majesty the Queen, has graciously consented to perform the opening ceremony of the Library's new building in Malet Place, London, W.C.1. The ceremony will take place on 7th November, 1933, at 3.15 p.m. As accommodation is limited, admission can only be by invitations, which will be issued by the National Central Library.

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Correspondence Courses.—Through the introduction of the new syllabus, the Correspondence Courses this year have necessarily been of an experimental character, and in view of the experience gained, certain alterations are being made in the times of the courses after 1st January, 1934.

Full particulars of the courses will be given in the *January Assistant*, but in short the courses will be run in future from April to May of the following year, and from November to December of the following year. In addition, it has been found possible to arrange special courses, for next year only, in the Elementary and Final Sections, to run from January and to finish in time for the December 1934 examinations. The last date upon which applications will be accepted in connection with these special courses is 20th December, and fees to members are as follows:—

							£	s.	d.
Elementary Section	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	11	6
Final Section:									
Part 1	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	11	6
Part 2	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	2	0
Part 3	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	2	0

Application forms, and particulars of all courses, should be obtained as usual from Mr. S. W. Martin, Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road, S.E.24.

There are signs that the tide of issues, so constantly rising for the last two years, is at last beginning to ebb, and the possibility appears that many librarians, instead of calling attention to circulation, will be busy explaining decreases in their next reports.

It is too early yet to say whether those signs are isolated cases or whether they are really portents of what will happen when depression lifts. If the latter, librarians of a future generation are likely to be caustic about a chance that was not taken. They will ask, Why did not librarians keep the readers they had made? Why was no national effort made by librarians to convert the masses to the right uses of leisure? What co-operation was there between librarians and the B.B.C.? Between librarians and the unemployment exchanges and centres? A speaker at the L.A. Conference began her paper with the words, "Let us thank God for the depression," and though she did not subsequently make very clear what she meant by those words, the phrase has implications.

So far, our chief contribution to the problem of what to do with the unemployed has been confined to a little wrangling over the question of whether we are ethically right in providing them with light reading, and we cannot help being a little ashamed when we see exemplified in their library press the methods which our

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American colleagues are using to create good out of evil, as compared with the isolated and unco-ordinated efforts of British librarians. But it is not too late. This winter two million people are going to have a lot of spare time and nothing much to do with it. In future winters (if there is any faith left after the last two years) everybody is going to have a lot of spare time.

It may depend on us more than we know whether they do anything worth doing with it.

Our contributors are very well able to stand up for themselves, and we do not propose to make any comment on the letters which appear in this number of *The Library Assistant* beyond removing the anonymity of our reviewer. The initials L. C. stand for Mr. Leonard Chubb, of Ipswich. We cannot, however, pass in silence a most tasteful editorial which appears in the current issue of one of our contemporaries. It appears desirable to point out that we are not in the habit of giving books for review to people unqualified to deal with them, and also that it is not a usual practice editorially to refer in one periodical to a review in another. Especially is the practice undesirable when the publisher of the periodical in which the reference appears also happens to be the publisher of that particular book.

Library Association Council Annual Election, 1933.—Voting papers will be sent on 15th November to all members whose subscriptions for 1933 were paid by 1st July last. Any member entitled to a vote who does not receive a voting paper must apply to the Secretary of the Library Association before 21st November. Transitional members must send the receipt for their subscription when making claims.

HARROGATE, 1933

A VERY respectable conference. I could wish that it had been not quite so decorous. For then I could describe it in my more characteristic vein—opening with a vignette of a delegate, bitterly remembering his experience at Cheltenham, and cautiously enquiring as to the precise effect of the Harrogate waters—and so on. But my only concession in this direction shall be this—Ps. cvii. 23–24. (I am reminded by the Editor that this trifling costs 7s. 6d. a page to compose.)

Monday had a philanthropic atmosphere. Half of us discussed libraries for seafarers, half discussed hospital libraries, and the other half identified, by the

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method of trial and error, the particular hill which bore (always at the very top) their hotel. I had to miss Mr. Lamb on hospital libraries, and was not particularly interested in the merchant service. But both were worthy objects, adequately described and discussed.

On Tuesday, after a not too typical address of welcome, the profession received its annual uplift, this year at the very capable hands of Professor Hetherington, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Liverpool. This inaugural address was printed with remarkable despatch by the Library Association, and I have distributed copies to my Committee with gratifying results. For myself, I found it a little remote from my daily work. Perhaps the ability to be inspired goes with a reverence for library technique. In the afternoon Mr. I. Barr Adams gave a really good paper on "The Distribution of books through voluntary bodies." His presentation of the difficulties of club librarians was sincere and convincing, and almost persuaded me to recant certain of my published views on tripe fiction. The old Adam persists, however. How I contrived to hear Mr. Irwin's paper on "Publicity work in rural districts" at a parallel meeting is a trade secret. It was very well worth hearing, and revealed Mr. Irwin as a capable technician with imagination and vision. In the evening we discussed our duties and opportunities in times of unemployment. The papers were conventional and the session was made remarkable mainly by the introductory speech of Sir Percy Jackson, a speech which helped me to an understanding of the plight of British industry under the present social system, and by the contribution of Cr. Ashworth, of Bolton. This stalwart, who gave me some good copy last year, shocked the meeting with ten minutes of the ripest I.L.P. stuff that one could hear anywhere. Sir Percy Jackson's demeanour under fire was in the best traditions of the English aristocracy.

On Wednesday, Mr. Savage opened a discussion on the problems of the Library Association. In many ways it was a masterly display. Mr. Savage showed himself a statesman, even if his policy is not always popular. I understand that his speech may later appear *in extenso*, and would prefer to refrain from commenting now on his plans for the future of the A.A.L. Section. Mr. Savage made one tactical error. He made great play with a suggestion which, he said, was to be put forward by another speaker in a later paper. The speaker in question, with superior cunning, omitted to put forward the suggestion—an obvious move which rather nullified much that Mr. Savage had said.

On Wednesday afternoon, Mr. S. A. Firth outlined a forward policy for librarianship. I personally was disappointed at a missed opportunity, and said as much in the ensuing discussion. From the very pointed silence which followed my effort, I gather that I am in a minority, or rather I *am* the minority. Mr. Firth certainly gave his audience food for thought and was outspoken on the subject of graduates. Cr. Ashworth, of Bolton, supported Mr. Firth with the very fishy

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tale of a young lady graduate who, after two months as a voluntary worker at Bolton, stole silently away and reappeared in a handsomely paid post soon after. In the evening Baillie Bell, of the Glasgow Libraries Committee, gave a very sound paper on library finance. Both the paper and the discussion which followed gave the Minister of Health some shrewd thrusts. As far as finance can be entertaining, Mr. Bell made it so.

Whether the delegates were intimidated by Mr. Welsford's sinister pink tickets I do not know. There must be some explanation of the peaceful atmosphere of the Annual Meeting. One has become accustomed to think of this meeting as the annual opportunity for the rank and file to let itself go. But not at Harrogate. Mr. Bursill proposed a resolution of which the meeting so completely approved that it did not really want to hear Mr. Bursill's speech in support. Everything else went smoothly, and the whole business was over in half an hour. I had a vague feeling that I ought to go to the box office and ask for my money back. Even the proposal to hold the next conference in London was accepted without comment, although everybody, in private conversation, agreed that London was a most unsuitable place.

On Thursday afternoon, Mr. J. Cranshaw had rather a rough passage with his paper on economical cataloguing. His audience seemed to think that Mr. Cranshaw's ambition was to effect a 100 per cent. economy in cataloguing by totally abstaining from all kinds of catalogue. Personally, I could see nothing very drastic in his proposals. But their reception was not really surprising when one remembers the almost magical rites performed by many librarians in the production of their catalogues. Mr. Cranshaw should have remembered that the catalogue is one of our defences, one of the things that a librarian alone can make. Still, perhaps I should not talk too much about cataloguing, although I have studied the subject on several occasions.

And finally, Miss Jean Halbert on the ideals of children's library work. I cannot adequately describe Miss Halbert's paper. This is almost certainly because I am a gross and materially minded clod who is incapable of appreciating any really uplifting speech. When Miss Halbert from time to time descended to my level, I violently disagreed with her, but for the most part I was lost. Miss Hummerston spoke a language which conveyed more to me. In her neat description of her clients at Leeds I recognized the children's rooms I have worked in. The Middlesbrough room was more aetherial than the juvenile department at Fulham.

In conclusion, my annual explanation that this is not a report but an impression of the Conference. I wish to make it plain that I shall evade to the utmost any attempt to hold me responsible for the views, if any, expressed in this article. The fault, if any, is entirely that of the Hon. Editor. 'Twas ever thus.

T. E. C.

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HOSPITAL LIBRARY PRACTICE

By MARGARET WATT-SMITH

WE hear so much of ideals in these troublous times; most people who attended the L.A. Conference this year must have been convinced that the average librarian was much more conscious of the ideals of the profession than their application, and cared more for its aims than its actualities. Some of these ideals are so distant as to be almost day-dreams, others come under the heading of immediate necessities. By this time everyone must admit that a library service in a hospital is one of the most attractive and necessary sidelines to library work, whether it be administered wholly, or only partly, by library authorities. But there is hardly any branch of the profession in which there is so much divergence in the administration and so little knowledge of the practices used in those services existing at present. It is because of this that one believes an account of the system in the City General Hospital in Sheffield will probably be welcomed by assistants who are wondering what such a service entails.

It is unnecessary to go into the question of organization, since that has already been fully dealt with by Mr. J. P. Lamb in his paper at the Harrogate Conference. I am concerned purely with practical administration, for the use of the assistant who is likely to be called into, or who feels a desire to enter, this branch of library work.

Before going into any details of administration, let me give a rough idea of the nature of the hospital itself, for any service is governed by existing conditions and environment. The City General is a rate-supported institution, accommodating about 650 patients, with a resident staff of 160. The scope is general; medical, surgical, and infirm cases, with a children's hospital attached. On the whole, the patients are taken from the lower working class; a number of them are so infirm that they are incapable of any effort mentally or physically; but the majority are only too thankful for something to lessen the intense monotony of their convalescence. The building is old, each block having two or more floors with a lift installed in one block only. So the first essential for any librarian here is strength and stamina, for all books are carried by hand to the upper floors.

The book-store is situated in the X-ray department, the most central spot in the hospital. It will shelve about 800 books, and is used for all office work, and when the staff borrow from the library. The trolley, of the American type, carries about 60 books on a sloping tier, easily visible by patients lying in bed. Two shelves at the back carry paste pot, repairs, and issue tray. And so to work.

About nine hours a week were allotted, taken on three afternoons, for the hospital service. This was soon found to be inadequate, and it was recently increased to twelve hours. An afternoon visit usually finds both patients and

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staff in a better humour, and avoids clashing with the medical visits in the forenoon. It is essential that a hospital library service should be as unobtrusive and quiet as possible, and for the first six months or so the librarian should walk warily, so that she does not infringe any of the unwritten rules which exist in every large hospital. A hospital is a small world, bewildering in its compactness and isolation, and the layman has many things to learn before he is comfortable in her gates. The first time I realized that the slight variance of shades of blue in the uniforms was not the result of careless laundering, but denoted sister, nurse, and probationer, and that you could tell the length of a nurse's service by the cut of her apron, I started to save endless time in finding the responsible people on the block, and avoided embarrassment in using the wrong form of address.

I visit all the male wards in bulk, thus loading the trolley once only in the afternoon, as the majority of the light fiction changes easily from ward to ward, and anything unusual can be obtained from the store in a couple of minutes. Then all the female wards, leaving an afternoon for the children's wards, tuberculosis block, and staff borrowing. The books are charged on a book card headed with accession No., class, author, and title, and ruled for charging. At first, issues were recorded by case No., but this was abandoned after one visit, because although the case No. is more accurate in the event of a missing book, the surname is always used in the ward. Then the blocks are sometimes split into two or three main wards, with one or two side-wards on each floor. Some sort of distinction was necessary to enable me to find patients in a hospital whose geography was bewildering in the extreme, and whose names were, as often as not, unknown to the nursing staff. When time is at a premium, endless questions are intensely irritating, both to librarian and nursing staff, and the librarian must remember where the patient was on the last visit, or be able to find her from notes. So, in the City General Hospital, a book charged to Bailey, 9,2,4, would be in the left-hand side-ward of the second floor on Block 9. Each patient is helped with the choice of his own book, because many of them have had neither time nor inclination to read before. Often a patient is sleeping, or still unconscious from the effects of chloroform. In these cases a little guesswork based mainly on his age and disease determines whether you leave him a book and what it shall be. The patients in the surgical ward recover very soon after their operations, and a man who is very ill one day will be wanting something to read long before the next visit of the librarian is due. The patients are allowed to have as many books as they require, so long as the stock is not unduly depleted for the next ward. They are encouraged to exchange amongst themselves, for visits cannot be made more often than once weekly. Hence the issue recorded at the hospital only represents about half the use made of the books. In just over a year 1,200 volumes were issued at the hospital.

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Light fiction forms the bulk of the stock, which numbers about 900 volumes. A certain amount of non-fiction of a very light character, and about 100 juvenile books are kept at the hospital, but most of the non-fiction is brought from the nearest branch library to satisfy individual requests. This is where the municipal library service scores over the one administered by voluntary workers. A library which has no pool stock behind it must of necessity buy more books, both fiction and non-fiction, in order to cope with the unusual borrower. I can draw immediately on a stock of 25,000 volumes at Sheffield's largest branch, so that most demands can be met on the next visit, within 24 hours of the request. To indicate the scope of recent enquiries I have been asked for Locke's *Essay on the human understanding*, Bridges' *Testament of beauty*, Richet's *Story of mankind* (from a boy of 12), and have compiled reading lists for chronic patients on astronomy, modern poetry, and philosophy. These seem to prove the necessity for a librarian with some professional experience, and most certainly to call for a pool stock. Of course, the majority of the patients keep to light fiction, because the fact of their illness or convalescence often renders them incapable of any lengthy effort of concentration. It is the chronic cases, not necessarily always elderly people, who bring that light to the librarian's eyes which betokens the fanatic. Most of them have been in months or years with little hope of any cure, and the weekly visit of the librarian has enabled them to take a renewed interest in outside affairs. They soon exhaust the books the Hospital library can offer, but regular supplies from the branch fill this need.

When buying stock for use in a hospital library, the physical qualities of the books must be considered. Fiction is mostly bought from the two-shilling editions published by Hodder. They are very light in weight and subject, with large type, and eminently suitable for reading in bed.

A stock register is kept on cards, for checking the stock and to serve as a catalogue for the librarian. A month's work will enable the average trained librarian to know her stock fairly thoroughly; anything extraordinary can be checked at the branch. A full catalogue for the average hospital library is never worth the time and trouble.

Books are loaned to the resident medical and nursing staffs. They borrow from the trolley on its weekly visit to the wards or one day a week at the allotted time. A well-appreciated service is given to the theatre staff. They are always busy during the times of the visits of the librarian, but books to meet their tastes are left in the office attached to the theatre, and collected from there. I should advise every hospital librarian to allow the staff to borrow the books. There has been no surreptitious smuggling of patient's books since the staff had every facility to borrow for themselves. This leakage of books from patients to staff is the greatest stumbling-block to the librarian. I believe I have overcome it by

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issuing staff tickets to all members of the staff wishing to join the library, and refusing to issue books except on their tickets. A request for their home address also impresses them with the necessity of returning all books before they leave the hospital.

Co-operation has been established with the Sister-Tutor, in charge of the professional education of the nurses, and with the teacher of the convalescent children. Lists on dietetics and nursing have been prepared, and books loaned to the schoolroom for special lessons.

All this is in the light of a new venture for the library profession, but it is one which has solid results and brings credit to those chief librarians and committees associated with it. One would like to see professional librarians in charge of the libraries, assisted, if necessary, by voluntary workers, and using to the full all those advantages that co-operation with the Public Library can offer. There can be few large systems so inadequately staffed that they could not spare one assistant for 12 hours a week to run a service in the local hospital.

Just one word to those assistants who feel fired with enthusiasm for this particular work. There is a lot of rubbish talked about the qualities demanded from a hospital librarian, just as there are high flights of fancy concerning those who are wedded to the sacred cause of children's work. To have a mental picture of Florence Nightingale smoothing pillows is fatal to the average hospital librarian. There are various qualities required, of course, the chief of which are a good and quick memory, patience, fleetness of foot, and a sense of humour. Without the latter, you perish.

If you are wedded to your reference library methods, your catalogue, and all the pedagogy so dear to the heart of librarians, stay away from the hospital. If you are not, take with you an interest in people and the conditions they live under, an insatiable curiosity if you've got one, and you will enjoy every minute of your time spent there.



CO-OPERATION IN FACT

By M. C. POTTINGER, F.L.A.

Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, Northern Regional Library Bureau

M^{R.} SEXTON, of Cardiff, concludes a remarkable article on "Co-operation in practice" with the observation that "it is high time someone told the blunt truth about the matter." With which I am in entire agreement, particularly since the publication of an article, chiefly notable for comprising the most compact aggregation of misstatements and preposterous generalizations which I have yet seen in any library journal.

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I propose to divide this reply into two parts, the first devoted to correcting Mr. Sexton, and the second to complying briefly with his final suggestion.

I

1. *Mr. Sexton*:¹ "There is a noticeable reluctance on the part of some areas to inaugurate schemes."

At a recent meeting of the National Committee it was reported that the schemes for regional systems covering fourteen new English counties were either completed or under consideration: every county in England, except seven, is involved in an existing or projected regional system. A scheme for regional co-operation covering the whole of Scotland has been drafted and finally approved by the Council of the Scottish Library Association. The Library Association of Ireland has appointed a Committee to report on the establishment of a system or systems covering the whole of Ireland. Several librarians in the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire have expressed a wish to become affiliated to the Northern System.

The establishment of any of these systems is, for the time being, dependent on the generosity of the Carnegie Trust, which, it is generally known, has exhausted its regional allocation for the current quinquennium.

2. *Mr. Sexton* complains that certain members of the *public* were uncertain of the exact functions of the National Central Library some years ago. Scarcely a pertinent criticism of library co-operation.

3. *Mr. Sexton*: "[Co-operation means] that each party participating in the scheme puts in an equal share of some kind for which they draw out an equivalent share."

Mr. Sexton confesses that he can find no other meaning for co-operation: only a very intensive search could have produced this one, and we must assume that he has overlooked the simple definition of "co-operate" as "work together"—with no conceivable bearing whatever on equality of shares put in and drawn out. It is the co-operation between the Postmaster-General and a country postman that delivers my letters; co-operation between *Mr. Sexton* and his Chief makes for an efficient public library.

To co-operate is to work together, the modest principle underlying British regional library systems.

4. On the unsteady basis of his definition, *Mr. Sexton* proceeds to ask how we can have co-operation between a number of small libraries and a large one. Or, to descend from the plane of abstract generalization, how is it possible in the Northern System for a large library like the Newcastle Lit. and Phil. to co-operate with the libraries of the North of England Mining Institute, the Northumberland

¹ I regret the frequency of the quotations: unfortunately, this cannot be avoided.

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Natural History Society, the Newcastle Society of Antiquaries, the Chemical Industry Club, the North-East Coast Institution of Engineers and Shipbuilders ? The possibilities for co-operation are obvious, and require no emphasis. That the possibilities are actualities is recorded in black and white in the register of loans arranged by the Northern Bureau.

Or again, assuming that Mr. Sexton is for some reason thinking only in terms of public libraries, how is it that the Council of the Northern System, representing small and large libraries alike, unanimously agreed *after two years' experience of regional co-operation*, to pay the subscriptions recommended by the Executive Committee at the last Annual Meeting ? Simply because regional co-operation between large public libraries, small public libraries, university libraries, and specialist libraries in the Northern area has proved eminently practicable.

Mr. Sexton continues with the confident assertion : "What is happening of course is that one is always giving and the other is always receiving." It is conceivable (though I doubt it) that this is the state of affairs at one particular Bureau, where Mr. Sexton may have opportunity for observation ; but to convey his interpretation of his observation in one trenchant generalization is, to put it mildly, seriously misleading.

Returning to facts, during the year 1932 books were lent by 15 libraries in the Northern Region, the principal lenders being, the Newcastle Lit. and Phil. with 1,171 books lent, Newcastle Public Libraries with 336, Armstrong College with 177, and Gateshead Public Libraries with 120. So far this year, 18 libraries in the Northern Region have lent books.

Blyth Public Library, among others, lent no books. Mr. Sexton's difficulty, I take it, is to understand how a library which does not lend a single book can be said to co-operate with another library which lends 1,171. The explanation introduces a factor which is essential for the success of regional co-operation, and which finds no mention in Mr. Sexton's survey—namely, the indispensability of a flourishing National Central Library, and its team of outliers.

To summarize the situation, which I think requires emphasis, the smaller libraries requiring help look to the larger libraries, the larger libraries requiring help look to the National Central Library. If the establishment of a regional system enables the National Central Library to offer an improved service to the larger libraries, are the latter not compensated for the service they render the smaller libraries ? A few more facts will perhaps drive this home. In 1929-30, before any large-scale regional systems were operating, the average price of each volume bought by the National Central Library was 14s. 9d. ; in 1932-3 the average price was 19s. 1d., i.e. the establishment of regional systems is further enabling the National Central Library to apply its limited funds to the purchase

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of that type of book which regional systems are unable to supply. The relief to the National Central Library resultant from the operation of the Northern System may be gauged from the fact that of 2,193 applications received at the Bureau from libraries in the region, in 1932, 1,575 were satisfied locally.

My space is limited, but a few more figures under this heading will establish the point finally. My own library, the Newcastle Lit. and Phil., lent, as I said, 1,171 volumes in 1932. But it also borrowed 212 volumes. Those 1,171 volumes were lying idle on the shelves (I never lend a book in demand by our own readers), and, apart from the normal wear and tear on issues, it did not cost me a farthing to lend them. The value of the books I borrowed was approximately £160. That is, it would have cost me £160 to provide the same service to our readers, had it not been for the National Central Library. Blyth lent no books, but borrowed 69, approximately worth £50. Blyth's subscription to the Bureau is £7 5s., the Lit. and Phil.'s £12, and 25 per cent. of the Bureau's total income is paid to the National Central Library. Is Mr. Sexton still so confident that small and large libraries cannot co-operate to their mutual advantage?

5. *Mr. Sexton*: "What is happening is that *everybody wants the same books at the same time*, and they are all newly published books and the latest editions of textbooks." In the absence of reliable evidence, I simply cannot believe that this is true of any regional system. Applied to the Northern Region, it is sheer nonsense.

6. *Mr. Sexton*: "In regard to new books the report of the Northern Regional Schemes in the *Library Association Record* for June, 1932, p. 178, stated that 'of the total demand for books, probably 80 per cent. is for modern books—it has been placed as high as 90 per cent.,' and they are all applied for at headquarters, namely, the large public library that is running the scheme."

This is probably the outstanding piece of distortion and garbled misstatement in the entire article. The reference is to an independent review of the annual reports of the West Midlands and Northern Regional Systems. The context of the foregoing extract is as follows: "The business of obtaining books can be clearly divided into two parts. The first problem is to locate and get books dating from the beginning of printing to some four or five years ago; the second is to supply modern books. Of these, the second is by far the more difficult, and the success which these bureaux have achieved in it (as in the other) is beyond all praise. Of the total demand for books probably 80 per cent. is for modern books—it has been put as high as 90 per cent.—and although the Bureaux and the National Central Library have barred applications for certain types of modern books, the percentage of applications which these receive for recent publications is still very high."

In other words, the reviewer stresses the value of the bureaux' perfectly legiti-

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mate function in arranging the loan of important books published in the last four or five years, excluding undesirable types. He does *not* imply, as Mr. Sexton wishes to, that 80-90 per cent. of loans arranged relate to newly-published popular books.¹ Altogether an unpleasant example of wilful distortion.

Applications are not received at the "large public library": they are received at the Regional Bureau. And no large public library is running any scheme. Every regional system is controlled by a Committee elected by participating libraries, and the daily routine of the Bureau is directed by an Honorary Secretary who, for obvious reasons of convenience, happens to be the librarian of the library which provides office accommodation for the Bureau.

7. Mr. Sexton: "Let the unbiased librarian go any morning to one of these regional headquarters and look at the list of books applied for by smaller libraries and the county libraries. I guarantee he would have a shock . . . if he saw it."

If this is another generalization, it is quite irrelevant to the Northern Bureau. On the other hand, if it is the case at some particular bureau which Mr. Sexton has in mind (and a statement of this kind requires substantiation), I would suggest that there is no cause whatever for alarm—for the following reasons:

No librarian is compelled to lend any book.

No librarian is expected to lend any book in demand by his own readers.

Therefore requests for popular books in demand automatically solve themselves.

Let us take the example given by Mr. Sexton. We receive at the Bureau three requests for Ellen Terry's *Letters to Bernard Shaw* on the day of publication. No local library can (or will) meet the requests: the applications are forwarded in the usual way to the National Central Library, with similar results, and they are returned a few days later to their sources marked "Unobtainable."

This simple treatment of such requests has been practised at the Northern Bureau for nearly three years now, and has effectively discouraged the few offenders. This—putting Daniel aside for the moment—is one of the most interesting points which has emerged from three years' operation of regional systems, i.e. that the unreasonable request (of any kind) is automatically defeated. It is difficult to see how trouble can arise if every librarian exercises his right to lend or refuse to lend at his own discretion, and if he invariably declines to lend what is wanted by his own readers. Furthermore, the latter, I feel, ought to be broadly interpreted. For example, the Lit. and Phil. is a very ready lender, but I should hesitate to lend another library a copy of Waldman's recent biography of Queen Elizabeth, although I have no waiting-list for it.

¹ *Actually at the Northern Bureau, not one in twenty applications is for a newly-published book, and perhaps 50 per cent. of the applications relate to books published in the last ten years.*

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If every librarian rigidly limits his loans to books which, in his judgment, are not required by his own readers, he is "regionally co-operating" in the ideal way. If he deprives his own readers to oblige someone else, that, of course, is his business, but scarcely seems fair. Which leads us to another interesting question.

8. Mr. Sexton gets very excited about certain librarians lending reference-books through the regional system. This, I would point out, is none of Mr. Sexton's business. It is a matter which concerns the local ratepayers, the Committee, and the librarian, and nobody else. Neither Mr. Sexton nor any Regional Committee can be dogmatic on this point, nor can they attempt to dictate hard-and-fast rules. Certain librarians in the Northern Region lend reference-books at their discretion, others don't. In the case of my own library, sometimes I lend reference-books and sometimes I don't; I am guided, as the others are, by the principle I have already described.

9. Mr. Sexton: "To satisfy adequately the co-operative wants of libraries in a regional scheme, the Headquarters Library would want at least six copies of Stephens's *Commentaries on the laws of England*, and numerous other textbooks.

One can only repeat that nobody can compel any library to lend any book. And nobody but Mr. Sexton ever advanced such a preposterous proposal.

This curious viewpoint, in common with several other statements in Mr. Sexton's article, boils down to a complaint that librarians are applying for books which they simply cannot have! If any librarian applies to his Regional Bureau for any book, and if it is unobtainable from any source, there the matter ends. Every librarian can decline to lend any book if he thinks fit, and he is not required to give reasons for his decision.

10. Mr. Sexton: "No doubt my amazed reader is wondering by this time, 'What is the librarian of the larger library thinking of that he allows this thing to go on?' " I give this one up.

11. Mr. Sexton states that the librarian of the library where the Bureau is situated is backed by the Carnegie Trust with a grant for compiling the regional catalogue, and that this fact somehow blinds him to the perils ahead of him. Surely it is superfluous to point out that the Carnegie grant is given to the Regional System, that its expenditure is controlled by the Regional Executive Committee, and finally that his implication generally is in very bad taste.

12. Mr. Sexton complains, in another careless generalization, that the salaries of the regional staff are borne by local ratepayers. The salaries of the Northern Bureau staff are met solely from regional funds, the salaries of the new South-Eastern Bureau staff are, or will be, met solely from regional funds, and the salaries of the West Midlands Bureau staff are met solely from regional funds. It is also the case that the Glamorgan and Monmouthshire Sub-Bureau is completing a scheme for meeting staff costs from regional funds.

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It is true that an assistant from the staff of the Lit. and Phil. regularly assists the Northern Bureau staff in tracing particulars of publisher and price for incomplete applications. Very probably the same thing takes place at other Bureaux. Whether that is the case or not, the fact remains that neither my Committee nor myself grudge the time and labour so spent. I cannot see that the rationalizing of library co-operation necessarily puts an end to any display of spontaneous helpfulness.

Mr. Sexton has described his version of the abuses of co-operation: he has omitted what is probably the most serious, namely, the spasmodic appearance of a grad-grinding, dog-in-the-mangerish attitude, immediately suspicious of "something for nothing."

Mr. Sexton: "It is fondly believed that the regional schemes are self-supporting. Actually they are nothing of the kind. The annual subscriptions from outside libraries are usually from £1 to £5. Rarely do they exceed £5," etc.

Another generalization, inaccurate as usual. The annual expenditure of the Northern Bureau, based on three years' operation, is about £260. The assessments total £265. The West Midlands Bureau has been self-supporting from the beginning, and is actually showing a balance which may reflect itself in reducing subscriptions. The newly-established South-Eastern Bureau is definitely self-supporting. I have neither time nor space to spend on correcting Mr. Sexton's statement at length, but might add that fourteen libraries in the Northern Region are assessed at figures ranging from £10 to £30.

To sum up Mr. Sexton's article, it is evident that he has made a superficial survey of the routine at one particular Bureau, he has drawn false inferences, and has finally committed the blunder of publicly concluding that his private inferences are generally applicable.

II

The facts of the achievements of library co-operation in the Northern Region cannot be described as sensational: they are only prosaic and heartening. Here they are.

1. Out of every 10 books asked for, 9 are supplied.
2. The National Central Library offers a much improved service.
3. There has been a marked increase in the number of requests made by readers for books not in the local library. Since the Northern System was formed, such requests have increased by over 30 per cent., i.e. the direct advantage to serious readers is steadily increasing.
4. The large libraries are borrowing freely, as well as lending freely.
5. Inter-library loans in the Northern Region are now effected more speedily and cheaply than they were in the days when every application had to come to

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London. A book or a parcel of several books will be carried from one library in the region to another at a flat rate of 6d., including full insurance. Books are generally delivered on the same day as they are collected, i.e. a cheap transport contract covering the country is, for the time being, not practicable: in the Northern Regional area at least, it is.

6. The Union Catalogue now comprises 150,000 entries. The stocks of 12 libraries, including 5 specialist libraries, are wholly or partly incorporated, and duplicates of 140,000 entries have been sent to the National Central Library, where they have already proved of value in tracing books not available anywhere else.

7. Co-operation in book purchase on a modest scale has effected valuable economies. When the Union Catalogue is completed, the possibilities of further systematizing this aspect of regional co-operation will be considered.

These are the bare facts of achievements in the Northern System. There is complete unanimity that the establishment of the system has justified itself, and one can say no more of a movement still in its infancy.

GEOGRAPHICAL LITERATURE IN THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

By WILLIAM A. MUNFORD

"GEOGRAPHY deals with the surface-relief of the earth, and with the influences which that relief exercises upon the distribution of other phenomena and especially upon the life of man."—M. I. NEWBIGIN.

Geography, to the uninitiated, is the driest of subjects. The word suggests lengthy lists of facts of climate, products, and population, dimly remembered from school days. Actually it is one of the most interesting of studies. Mr. Van Loon's recent book, *The Home of mankind*, shows quite clearly how interesting, relevant, and essential it can be.

A general knowledge of geography is of value because it broadens the mind and helps to create that balanced culture which is so necessary in a world peopled by specialists in knowledge and specialists in ignorance. "The specialist is never completely civilized."

Geography, as taught a hundred years ago, was a subject the first principles of which were still undiscovered. Indeed, it was not until the researches of Wallace and Darwin had shown clearly the existence of a "delicately adjusted balance between organisms and their surroundings, taken in their widest sense," that geography became a science.

One of the most important developments of the new theories of environment was

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the delimiting of the "natural region," a work due primarily to Herbertson, one of the greatest of modern geographers, whose little book, *Man and his work*, is still an extraordinarily accurate and penetrating introduction to our subject. The "natural region" discovery enabled the geographer to divide the world into zones of similar climatic conditions which might be repeated many times (e.g. the so-called "Mediterranean" type in Europe, California, Chile, Cape Colony, and South and South-western Australia). The resulting simplification is obvious.

Modern ignorance of geographical matters is usually due to a poor knowledge of physical geography, a subject which is still given far from adequate attention in the schools. Hence the desirability of providing in the public library a good supply of introductions to the subject, which are sufficiently attractive and interesting to appeal to the adult reader. Since, in addition, geography is an optional or compulsory subject in the General School, Matriculation, and similar examinations and in the Intermediate and Final examinations of the Arts, Science, Economics, and Commerce degrees of most English universities, it is obvious that a considerable supply of geographical literature will be required in all libraries.

There is, unfortunately, a lack of good simple introductions. Newbigin's *Modern geography*, from which the above quotations are taken, is probably still the best first book for the intelligent layman. Her later book, *New regional geography of the world*, is more in the nature of a textbook. Mr. Van Loon's book may be noticed again as a more popular type of introduction. These books might well be duplicated.

There is a better supply of general textbooks. Brook's *Regional geography of the world* is good. *General and regional geography*, by Unstead and Taylor, is a modern statement of fundamentals, suited to post-matriculation students. The works of L. Dudley Stamp are also of importance. Wilmore's *Groundwork of modern geography* is hard reading, so full is it of essential facts, but it is one of the best general texts. Gregory's *Geography: structural, physical, comparative* is out of date, but still useful. Chamberlain's *Geography: physical, economic, regional* is American and a little dull. The enormous *International geography*, edited by H. R. Mill, is the work of seventy specialists and, although out of date, contains masses of essential information. It is a useful book for the reference library.

Many excellent treatises devoted entirely to individual continents or regions have been published during the last few years. The majority of these are included in Methuen's "Advanced geographies," Harrap's "New geographical series" or Longmans "University geographical series." The books in the first and third series are all excellent, those in the second are of unequal merit. Suggate's *Africa*, however, is a most useful work, particularly as it fills a gap of long standing. The same may be said of Stamp's *Asia*, a tremendous work in the "Advanced Geography" series. Dr. Newbigin's *Southern Europe* is in the same series, and supplements her delightful earlier work, *The Mediterranean lands*. Perhaps the

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monograph which approaches nearest to a work of genius is Lyde's *Continent of Europe*, which should be in all lending libraries. The Oxford *Survey of the Empire*, which was, until recently, the only comprehensive book on certain countries, e.g. South Africa, is still a useful addition to reference stock.

By far the best and most complete treatment of physical geography is Martonne's *Traité de géographie physique*, a French work, still untranslated, in three volumes. It is so important that a copy should be included in the stock of every large library. A translation of the same author's *Shorter physical geography* is now available, and should find a place in all libraries. Lake's *Physical geography* is one of the best English works, and supplements Martonne and Salisbury's *Physiography*, a very comprehensive and useful American work. There should be no difficulty in selecting the required number of books on this subject, as the literature is large. Particular attention may be given to books having clear diagrams and photographs. Lake's book is valuable on this account.

Human geography or anthropo-geography, as it is sometimes called, owes its rapid development largely to the researches of Rätzl. The three volumes of the translation of his *History of mankind* are still valuable in large reference libraries. The very readable book of his disciple Semple, *Influences of geographic environment*, is essential in all large lending libraries. Other important writers are De la Blache—whose *Principles of economic geography* is another essential book—Brunhes, and Huntington. The work of the last writer, *The Human habitat*, is particularly useful. It will be noticed that, while the foundation of the science of anthropo-geography was laid by a German scholar, France and America have contributed most to its later development. This fact is worth remembering when new books are selected. As the subject is a relatively new one the book reviews in the *Geographical Journal* and *Geography* should be followed with special attention.

There is a limited literature dealing specifically with plant and animal geography. Hardy's *Introduction to plant geography* and *Geography of plants* and Newbigin's *Animal geography* are all reliable books. Lydekker's works on animal geography and on individual animals are still used by students to a limited extent, but, with the exception of *A Geographical history of mammals*, need not find a place in the average public library.

A large number of books on economic geography have been published during the past few years. Useful introductions are Newbigin's *Commercial geography*, Lyde's *Man and his markets* (suitable for the Junior library) and his recent *Primer of economic geography*, and Herbertson's *Man and his work*, noted above. The textbooks are also good, particularly Macfarlane's *Economic geography* and the inevitable Chisholm (*Commercial geography*). Smith's *Industry and trade* is a useful American book dealing with the economic affairs of North America in great detail, but paying much less attention to the rest of the world. Taylor's *Production and trade*

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and Pitman's *Commercial atlas* are reference-library essentials. A copy of the latter is also useful in the lending library. The monograph which I would single out as essential purchases are two books by Miss E. H. Carrier, *The Thirsty earth* and *Water and grass*. *The Thirsty earth* is a study of irrigation, from both the practical and historical viewpoints, is wholly delightful reading, and, as it is the only modern English book on its subject, is worthy of inclusion in all libraries. *Water and grass* is a study of transhumance—that seasonal shift from summer to winter pasture which is typical of the pastoral economy of Southern Europe (e.g. in the Cevennes Languedoc region of Languedoc, France).

Travel and topography is invariably one of the most popular sections in the library. One of the surest guides to selection is the name of the publisher. Globetrotting books issued by certain houses may be good; they are usually ephemeral books which are devoid of any geographical interest. On the other hand, books issued by firms such as Witherby are usually reliable and useful. It is not always easy to judge. Author, style, scope, and illustrations are often useful guides, but the book reviews of the *Geographical journal* are the best guide. They have the disadvantage that they are sometimes belated. Books of the calibre of Thomas's *Arabia Felix* are obvious necessities as published, but the majority of books in this class can quite well be deferred for second-hand purchase. Second thoughts are usually more critical thoughts.

Most interesting and necessary are those books, written in the dawn of geographical knowledge, such as the works of the immortal liar Mandeville and the more trustworthy Marco Polo. Although many of these classics are as full of old wives' tales as is the Nazi philosophy, they still have their interest and fascination, and serve to show how reliable knowledge was built up. A careful examination of the early chapters of books such as Baker's *History of geographical discovery and exploration* or the recent *Making of geography* by Dickenson and Howarth will provide the librarian with all the necessary information required for selection. The works of the classical writers which have geographical interest, such as Strabo, will be selected rather as classics of literature.

There is a growing literature dealing with historical geography. The *Historical geography of the British dominions*, edited by Lucas, is essential in large libraries. Smaller works, such as Fairgrieve's *Geography and world power*, will be well used.

The best geographical periodical is the *Geographical journal*, the organ of the Royal Geographical Society. The book reviews in this periodical often reach the highest standard achieved by the technical review, and are always invaluable. The *Scottish geographical magazine* and *Geography*, the latter a quarterly, are also useful in the larger library. *Geography* is a scholastic periodical, not dissimilar in production to *History*. Its short reviews are always worth following. The *National geographic magazine*, the American publication, is easily the most popular

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of geographical periodicals. Its contents are not invariably serious geography.

Geography, according to Mr. Bentley, is about maps. This being so, the selection of maps and atlases has to be considered. Some Ordnance Survey maps are essential in all libraries. All large libraries ought to have a set of the inch to the mile series. As this series is now undergoing revision it is good policy to buy all the published items (about six), and add the others as they are published during the next few years. This has the advantage of spreading the rather large expenditure over a reasonable time. A set of the quarter-inch to the mile is a very cheap investment for the smaller library.

Much care is needed in the selection of atlases. Bartholomew's and Philip's atlases are all reliable, but one has to beware of the numerous cheap atlases on the market, none of which is of value to the serious enquirer.

The "Chambers of Commerce" atlas is well-nigh indispensable as a source of economic and commercial information. An interesting new atlas in crown octavo size is the *Handy reference atlas*, published by Bartholomew. This, in spite of its small size, is thoroughly reliable and useful. A copy of Philip's or Longmans *Gazetteer* should be in all reference libraries. When selecting gazetteers it is wise to ascertain the date of the census figures, particularly the British ones, used in population statistics. A comparison with the index of *The Times* atlas gives a good idea of general scope.

Book selection in geography is not easy owing to a lack of accessible modern bibliographical material. Mill's *Guide to geographical books and appliances* is sadly out of date, but, together with the relevant sections of "Best books" and "Standard books," it is still useful as a source of older titles. (The copious bibliographies of the *International geography* are similarly useful.) Invaluable bibliographies are contained in the *Statesman's year-book*. The relevant sections in the *Catalogue of British scientific and technical books* are very useful. There are quite a large number of books which contain fairly comprehensive bibliographies. Such are Unstead and Taylor's *General and regional geography* and Wilmore's *Groundwork of modern geography*. This latter book contains a most valuable list of nearly two hundred essential books, in the form of short bibliographies at the ends of chapters. The classified catalogue of Economics, Geography, etc., issued in 1927 by the Bethnal Green Library, is a very useful check on stock. The material for selection exists in abundance, but it is not obvious material.

Mr. Clive Bell asserts, with justice, that the enthronement of reason is a prime fundamental of a civilized society. At a time when every conceivable social activity has international implications; at a time when prejudice, under the influence of the popular press, becomes so attractively like reason, a knowledge of world geography is more than ever necessary. Hence the need for the best possible stocks of geographical books.

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COUNCIL NOTES

Vacancy on Council.—The following members have been duly nominated for the vacancy on the non-London side of the Council:

Mr. A. J. R. Blackman, Reading Public Libraries.

Mr. L. A. Burgess, Cardiff Public Libraries.

Mr. W. G. Fry, Manchester Public Libraries.

Mr. G. P. Jackson, Leeds Public Libraries.

The election will take place by show of hands at the November meeting, in accordance with the Rules. Members unable to be present are entitled to record their vote in writing by intimating their choice to the Honorary Secretary not later than Tuesday, 7th November.



DECEMBER EXAMINATIONS, 1933

The *dates* of the Examinations are as follows:

11th December	Intermediate, Part 1.
12th December	Intermediate, Part 2.
13th December	Elementary.
13th December, 2-5 p.m.	Final, Part 3, First Paper.
14th December	Final, Part 3, Second and Third Papers.
14th December, 2-5 p.m.	Languages.
15th December	Final, Part 1.
16th December	Final, Part 2.

The *Examiners* for the Examinations are as follows:

Elementary.—Messrs. H. A. Sharp, F.L.A., and A. Sparke, F.R.S.L., F.L.A.

Intermediate, Part 1 (Classification).—Messrs. L. Stanley Jast, M.A., F.L.A., and L. R. McColvin, F.L.A.

Intermediate, Part 2 (Cataloguing).—Messrs. J. D. Stewart, F.L.A., and F. E. Sandry, F.L.A.

Final, Part 1 (English Literary History).—Messrs. H. M. Adams, M.A., and Gurner P. Jones, B.A., A.L.A.

Final, Part 1 (Literary History of Science).—Mr. H. T. Pledge, B.Sc.

Final, Part 2 (Bibliography and Book Selection).—Messrs. K. G. Hunt, B.A., F.L.A., and W. M. Dickie, M.A., Ph.D., F.L.A.

Final, Part 2 (Indexing and Abstracting).—Mr. A. F. Ridley, F.L.A.

Final, Part 2 (Palaeography and Archives).—Mr. Hilary Jenkinson, M.A., F.S.A.

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Final, Part 3 (Advanced Library Administration).—Messrs. W. C. Berwick Sayers, F.L.A., and J. E. Walker, F.L.A.

Final, Part 3 (University and Special Libraries).—Dr. R. Offor, B.A., F.L.A.
Languages.—*Welsb*—Mr. W. Ll. Davies, M.A., F.L.A.; *Latin*—Mr. B. Anderton, M.A., F.L.A.; *Italian*—Mr. A. J. K. Esdaile, M.A., F.S.A., F.L.A.; *Spanish*—Mrs. H. F. Grant, B.A.; *French*—Mr. H. M. Cashmore, F.L.A.; *German*—Mr. J. Wilks, M.A., F.L.A.

NEW MEMBERS

FREDERICK J. ABBOTT (Fulham); Roy K. B. Aldridge, Wm. A. Taylor, Lorna Wallis (Hendon); Norman Anderson (Coatbridge); Agnes P. Auld (Glasgow); F. Barlow, Nancy C. Oakeshott, Joan A. Sayers (Croydon); E. Arnold Batty (Greenwich); Eveline Brecknell (Hereford); Kathleen C. Calvert, Doris P. Godding, Peter J. Heaton, Olive M. Johnson, Elizabeth Podesta (Bristol); Basil E. Colman (Hendon); Anna Elmer, Kenneth Jay (Merton and Morden); Miss F. M. Green (Glossop); Mollie Hardie (Wrexham); Miss G. Hunt (East Ham); Ronald E. James (Shrewsbury); Edward F. Ladds (Cambs. County); Edmund G. Lea (Wood Green); Winifred H. Lord (Whitehaven); Cathleen C. de la C. Madden (Willesden); Rowena E. Merchant (Welwyn); R. J. Mitton (Merton); W. J. Murison (Dunfermline); G. J. Paley (Exeter); N. S. E. Pugsey (Bristol); H. C. Richardson (Southwark); Winifred E. Robertshaw (Luton); Renee K. Rugg (Reading); Mary L. Savell (Leyton); Geoffrey P. Starling (Hammersmith).

Midland Division.—Dorothy M. Adams, E. E. Burke, T. M. Doust, C. E. Greaves, Miss E. M. Hutton, Miss E. G. Lightwood, K. A. Mallaber, Miss E. M. Newey, Miss E. A. Stratford, F. S. Stych (Birmingham); P. A. Barnett, J. V. Dearn, F. H. Lamb (Wolverhampton); E. A. Goodwin (Northants County); B. M. Makepeace (Stroud); Isabel Mackenzie (Leicester); Gertrude A. Pearson (Warwick County); F. N. Reed (Wolverhampton); R. W. Snead (Smethwick); Miss C. F. Telfer (Worcs. County); Miss M. E. Wilson (Worcester).

North-Western Division.—Albert Clarkson (Chorley); W. S. Haugh, Miss N. Smith, R. F. Thornton, Miss B. K. Williams, J. M. Williams (Liverpool); Miss E. M. Summers (C.W.S. Information Bureau, Manchester).

South-Eastern Division.—S. L. Scutt (W. Sussex County, Chichester).

South Wales Division.—Thomas J. Biley (Cardiff); Stanley Yonge (Swansea).

South-Western Division.—Lewis G. Corner, Alice I. Hill, Francis Pepin (Bournemouth); Nora E. Gregg (Portsmouth).

Yorkshire Division.—John A. C. Broadwater (North Riding County, Northallerton); Alice M. Holmes (Bingley).

The Library Assistant

CORRESPONDENCE

CROYDON PUBLIC LIBRARIES,
NORBURY BRANCH LIBRARY,
BEATRICE AVENUE,
LONDON ROAD,
S.W.16.
10th October, 1933.

THE EDITOR,
THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

DEAR SIR,—

I shall be grateful if you will grant me the opportunity of commenting on a few of the statements made in L. C.'s criticism of my book, *Lending library methods*, which appeared in the October issue of *The Library Assistant*.

He (or she) says that the ideals of the service find no place in it. This is quite unnecessary in a book dealing exclusively with the routine methods of working one department, and by no means indicates that the author has no ideals.

To state that "the changes introduced by the general adoption of open-access find no place" is sheer nonsense. See Chapters I and II, and pp. 423, 47, 102-4, 162-7.

If the Preface had been read intelligently, the reference to the omission of propaganda methods would not have been made. I take it that "cultural aspects of lending library work" means in practice, aiding readers, and increasing the issue of non-fiction books. Within the limits just stated, this aspect of our work has not been inadequately treated.

The suggestion that borrowers' numbers have a place in card-charging is L. C.'s, not mine. Surely L. C. realizes that a number is a quicker and much more accurate means of reference than a name. But perhaps no records of overdue notices despatched or of tickets sent between branch libraries are kept in the library system in which L. C. works!

Although the statement near the bottom of p. 29 can be made to read that the card catalogue is more economical than the sheaf, it was intended to refer to the type of accommodation for the sheaf catalogue. The sheaf form is certainly more economical than the card.

I am in entire agreement with the remark about useless records being the bugbear of lending library work, and the book was written with this in mind. Most records have some value, but whether this value justifies the time spent on them or not, depends on local circumstances. It was my object to describe the best of these, not to state that certain practices or the keeping of such-and-such a record is ridiculous, because methods often have to be varied to meet local needs.

The Library Assistant

Does L. C. think that, in these days of reduced library incomes, the qualified librarians who keep street indexes do so merely to relieve unemployment ?

Yours faithfully,

L. MONTAGUE HARROD.

[Our reviewer replies :

It is unfortunate for Mr. Harrod that as an act of courtesy you must print his letter. The title of the book is *Lending library methods*, and a statement in the preface cannot excuse an author for omitting from a book with such an all-embracing title some of the most important, and all the recent, methods employed in lending libraries. I am accused of stating that borrowers' numbers have a place in card-charging. I would ask your readers' indulgence to the extent of referring to what I did say. Mr. Harrod does not think they are necessary, but goes on to justify them. His last paragraph is intended to be facetious—dangerous ground this, because I was sorely tempted in my review to make play with some of the statements in the book, particularly the author's mention of overalls.

My review was sincere and serious. I read the volume from cover to cover, and I do not withdraw one word of my statement. There was nothing in the book so unintelligent as this letter, which does credit neither to Mr. Harrod nor his authorship.

L. C.

PUBLIC LIBRARY,
BOGNOR REGIS,
WEST SUSSEX.
11th October, 1933.

THE EDITOR,

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

SIR,—

Miss Wragg's detailed article in the September *Library Assistant* on "County library finance with particular reference to differential or special rating" is of interest to everyone engaged in county work. But I was disappointed to find that, although the relevant sections of the 1919 Act were quoted, there was no discussion on the soundness or hollowness of the usually-accepted legal basis for special rating.

Miss Wragg states: "From reading the 1919 Public Library Act we learn that the two possible sources of income are: (a) general flat rate, and (b) additional rates levied on local areas in accordance with Section 4, subsection (2)." This subsection was quoted in full and introduced with the sentence "Section 4, subsection (2), relates to the levy of special rates."

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Are we to infer from this that the whole of Section 4, subsection (2), is exclusively concerned with special rating? If so may I ask:

(1) Where is the clause authorising county councils to levy a general rate?

(2) What are the grounds for supposing that the opening phrase of this subsection "*Any* [the italics are mine] expenses incurred by the council of a county under the Public Libraries Acts" excludes the most obvious and vital items of books and binding, transport, headquarters expenses, and such other items as are provided from the general rate?

As regards (1) it may be argued that the power is automatically granted in Section 1, subsection (1), which gives to county councils the power of adopting the Public Libraries Acts, and that there was no need for any specific mention of a general rate. But if that is so, what was the necessity for special subsections dealing with the borrowing of money and the auditing of accounts.

Or does Miss Wragg mean that the first part of Section 4, subsection (2)—"Any expenses incurred by the council of a county under the Public Libraries Acts shall be defrayed out of the county fund"—relates to the general rate, and the second part beginning "and the council may, if they think fit, after giving reasonable notice . . ." down to ". . . maintained by that council under those Acts" relates to the special rate? It is a little difficult to believe that an Act of Parliament could not spare even separate sentences for the authorization of two methods of finance nor attempt to define the particular expenses to meet which each was designed.

From the wealth of detail given in her article, it is obvious that Miss Wragg has a specialist's knowledge of county library finance and special rating in practice, and it would be interesting to hear the reasons for her apparent acceptance of the orthodox interpretation of the much-quoted 4(2), and how far, if at all, she would be prepared to admit the possibility that the whole system of special rating is a vast bamboozle.

Yours faithfully,

E. J. CARNELL.

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